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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dĕro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terĭn"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("năbber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurĕza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "čhera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

923 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

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136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amä-tä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaetat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like monor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

796 805 796 1st day of the month - "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.

5th - "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.

12th - "Mikael", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriel". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Häala Egziabhär" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

796 holy day of the year, "Mäsqäl", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Mäsqäl abäba" i.e. Mäsqäl flower, are considered "engutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark ofNoah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engecha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman withthe formula:

"Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Mäsqäl" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian 776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Eläni" (Helena) who sponsored an expeditinn to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

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own people and to the Christians of Constantinople. Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good, so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets. This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance ring-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the
[77] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl",
[82] the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so
[87] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys
874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
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532 The actual church paintings are in oils, and they are the most amazing products of Abyssinian art. They are highly formalized compositions, which is the chief concern of the artist, but accuracy of significant detail, expression and action, is also important. (To the foreigner the scenes and persons portrayed at first look naive and childlike.) Some scenes, if showing continuous developments of the story told, are arranged in strips like American comic strips, with the words spoken by the characters written in Amharic near the mouth of the speaker; names of sacred figures are written in Geez, so that no one can misread the story portrayed.

Among frequent subjects are scenes from the Bible, especially New Testament, portrayed realistically even to teardrops and drops of blood; and the lives of saints. Thus, the Abyssinian saint Takla Haymanot is shown one-legged, for he lost the other on a mission. Biblical characters are portrayed as light or light-brown of skin, and [776] God is shown as a long-bearded Mediterranean-or-European-looking elder. Abyssinians are shown as brown in coloring, other Africans as black with peppercorn hair. One of the most frequent strips is the subject of the voyage of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, the conception of the prince Menelik I, and his miraculous return after reaching adulthood. This is semi-religious, but acceptable because of the "Solomonic Dynasty" acting as defender of the faith. By extension however, battle scenes showing Abyssinians defeating the Italian invaders in 1896, also "heathen" Shanqalla and Danakil, are occasionally seen and have become common for the tourist trade.

One of the noteworthy symbolisms in these oil paintings is the traditional portrayal of infidels, evil beings, demons, sinners, and torturers of Christian saints - in profile. By contrast, all good Christians are painted full-face. In profile, only one eye is shown, which may be one of the possible explanations - reduction of the power

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Gees, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesrag" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-
like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form
at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical
hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It
is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes
it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence
of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world
is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection
with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out
loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among
homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior
that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular
interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant
annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because
of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs
("ganare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday"
(when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.
829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view
of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia.
Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65,
pp. 361-4.

8/2 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to [539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the däbtära scribes of Ənṭoṭo, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Ənṭoṭo,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[77] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

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x 794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x 794 773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

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X 794 T76 763

There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and causes epileptic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous male "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

X 794 T76 823

The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In Abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farasey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjära" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

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woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized. No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

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X 794 TK 755 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients: procedures of healing: basic "zar" personalities.</u>

X 794 755 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

X 794 756 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar" doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

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X 794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X 794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X 794 ●776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X 794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

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X 794 164 A53

Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the däbtära practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyën" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or täñqway sorcerer.

X 794 776 753

The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

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X794 TK 153 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "maqwadasha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if [231] angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 TK A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at [845] night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result [844] of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male [832] connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

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Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil. This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizé" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

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so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling (much as "mise" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called "temani" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

X 794 765 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that particular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar walaj").

X 794 782 755 776 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very complex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derku", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "mäqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand X 794 776 755 825 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some

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X794 776 755 [829] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[754] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

X 794 776 755 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual [782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "damqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tanqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X 794 776 821 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

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rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

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Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like

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to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

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The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurəsa" - usually generic for all male zars; "Yeqabe"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

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"Wadaj" for male zars that specialise in possessing women; "Wuresa" for subordinate zars. Female zars are regarded as "undisciplined" and rarely organise.

The names are often personalizations of characteristics and attributes of the zars. Others are terms of flattery designed to render the zar benevolent; or based on the home region of the zar. In some cases a zar spirit has "ordered" concealment of his real name, so that a new name has had to be abstracted from Amharic, or Geez, or Arabic, or a syncretic mutilation of all three languages. Some zars prefer to be addressed by their "färäs sem" (knighthood name). Some zars, of Galla Muslim or Amharic Christian affiliation, insist that their name indicate their religious and ethnic identification. Sometimes the meaning of the name is lost, or cannot be traced readily because it is in "zar language" - itself largely a mutilation of Amharic, though this is not admitted. Finally, the poet who performs in the zar cult may think up new adjectives to describe the hoped-for benevolence of the zar, whereupon the zar spirit, pleased, adopts the adjedtive as a byname, or name, decreeing that henceforth he be addressed this way.

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Table 12: The Zar Spirits: Their Powers, Social Status, Personalities, Specializations.

Male Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Weqābē (also generic for all protective zar spirits); addressed "bərrāwo Weqābē" - (polite, "by your protection, guiding spirit).	great	high; "educated".	some regard him as originally Galla, But "later educated"	protective	beard; manly beauty so male devotees don't shave.	protects; brings beauty to face of possessed women. Brings "luck". Can predict the future.
Gurēza (lit. colobus monkey), generic name of all male zars; addressed as "mushirra" (lit. bridegroom, Sire).	medium to great	varies with his role.	undefined	mischievous-playful.	monkey	can be turned into a protective spirit, if sufficiently catered to with gifts, and flattery.
Wadaj (lit. lover) also generic for male zars that specialise in possessing women	subordinate to powerful zars.	mostly Muslim		fickle and promiscuous	"qhat" leaf (typically chewed by Muslims)	most common protective Zar of possessed women, who are married or divorced.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult.	Attributes; Major Concerns Specialisations
Wurēza (also Werēza, generic for subordinate zars, those serving as pages to powerful zars or still "students")	little power	low; (but some have potentialities).	often Coptic Christian.	resembles adolescent boys and young-warrior personalities.		immature in development, but getting "educated" and therefore potentially of value as protectors.
Aweliya (from Arabic "waliy" - Saint) (sometimes generic adjective)	great	high	unlimited; regional center at Gondar (town).	tough; can be made protective; generally irascible.	lioness, female elephant, his "cattle".	At present the chief zar possessing Lady Salāmtu, chief zar doctor in Gondar (Begemdir).
Sayfu Changär (lit. sword, whipping stick; Arabic). Brother of evil, powerful female zar Rahēlo.	great	High nobility (Commander of Right Guard of zars).	Coptic Christian, friend of Ethiopian Saint Gäbrä Mänfäs-Qeddus.	"educated at Jerusalem" can be powerfully protective.	the lemon tree; his "gända" (mystic coffee tray symbolises the "tabot" of the church.	Adept at medicines, therefore powerful protector; also as commander over many "wädaj" zars whom he can restrain, and to whom he allocates gifts of incense, etc.
Mälak (lit. angel, from Geez language)	medium	medium	of Geez (Semitic) affiliation, hence Coptic Christian	mystic; has veiled original identity	horse (his old name "Färäs", horse, is tabooed by his own order.	appears in dreams in the shape of a horse.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Abba Yosef	great but vulnerable to Coptic religious appeal	medium	religious Copt; in company of Säyfu Čhängär, hence "educated".	very jealous; purist. Can be made protective, (even restrained through amulet of däbbära, since he is religious Copt)		causes miscarriages in married women out of jealousy for husband and as "purist". Undergoes baptism every Tämqät (Epiphany), blesses the pool of water like bishop.
Adbar (supposed to mean "protect me") in zar language; "guardian" in Galla language)	medium	medium	religious Copt of ancient times. Dwells in shady churchyards.	outdoor spirit but lazy. Educated, but old and inactive. Can become protective.	trees that give shade.	causes rheumatism, to "keep his horse from moving". Requires sheep sacrifice under shady tree consecrated to him.
Rom-Mädad (lit. flame from Rome; also: malaria (fever)	medium	medium	Christian; in company of Säyfu Čhängär.	educated in Jerusalem; when made protective, teaches use of medicinal herbs.	flame, fire, fever.	regarded as having taught mankind the use of fire and cooking, from his own flame on a rock in the Red Sea. Can make fire by striking his forehead with a finger.
Abba Qwaqas	med.	med.	Coptic Christian	when made protective, inspires success in business caravans, mead houses, construction, real estate.		likes to possess women who have masculine tendencies whom he makes wear jodphurs. (Devotees of this zar are often women operators of mead houses).

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sayd Qadr	med.	med.	Christian	rarely protective; easily angered.	noon	causes indigestion; esp. at midday, when he likes to "descent" into his possessed (this is the hour when food is first taken on "fast days").
Qalē	great	high	believed to be of Galla ethnic origin, lowland jungle region.	terrible when angry; stubborn, does not perform "gurri" easily. When made protective, spirit of "hearth and home"; and aids hunters, by "taming" the game.		neglect causes him to destroy harvests, kill cattle, abort women, bring locusts; at other times he is "lazy zar" causing rheumatism. Requires animal sacrifice under sycamore.
Barya (lit. slave)	sometimes great	low	believed from Nilotic Sudan of "Barya" (negroid) people, whence he has come to wreak vengeance for the enslavement of his people by the Amhara.	evil, very stubborn, never protective; at most agrees to plague the patient less. Sometimes attacks in group, led by their chief "Legwon", like a tornado, who has red eyes.	tornado	causes epilepsy ("hesama barya") especially in men, whom he prefers to possess. The convulsions are his orgies. But he is vulnerable to spellbinding formulae of däbtära.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "Zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Ganyu (lit. tonsure) addressed as "Dämmanä"-cloud	med.	low	home in bamboo forest of Western escarpment near Metemma (Sudan border); Galla.	Can be made protective spirit.	cloud ("Dämmanä") also bamboo.	feeds on bamboo; only plagues on occasion, especially caravans passing through his district.
Qallechcha	med.	low	Galla Muslim, from Wallega province.	Rarely protective, but has power only in limited regions. When protective, teaches rare medicines and healing.		requires offerings under special trees consecrated to him: is fond of blood esp. of chickens.
Gran Sellatä (lit. left-handed hen).	medium	low	"pagan"	when protective teaches effective healing. Considered wise.		specialist on desires of other zars, expert on their animal sacrifices. Can aid zar doctors in their negotiations with other zars.
Shäh Anbäso (sometimes synonym for Awaliya) (lit. lion)	great	high	Muslim, but with Christian relatives.	rarely protective. Considered negative side of Awaliya zar.	lion	requires tawny goat as sacrifice, to symbolize lion. Was husband of "Rahälo. Commands 98 zars of the "house of the left guard".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shäh Näbe (lit. Chief Snake)	med.	med.	Muslim	rarely protective	snake	appears in dreams by his symbol, the snake.
Mäyane	med.	low		evil spirit		inspires rebellion among warriors against chiefs; among feudal lords against king.
Weshenger	med.	low		mischievous, but not evil		likes to cause sudden, violent rain, rendering caravans helpless in the mud.
Käbrä (lit. glory, honored one)	med.	med.	believed to have his home in Tigrè province.	protective spirit for hunters.		hunting
Ocmari (lit. the proud, vain, defiant	med.	low	lives in bush	can become protective	big male of baboon family-"gamäre"	warlike and leadership qualities.
Ber Alänga (lit. silver whip)	med.	med.		very greedy; rarely protective except for very rich patients.		interested in economic exploitation. The "rich man's zar".

Name	Power	Social Status of the "Zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major concerns/ Specializations
Azzaj Deba (lit. Commander of the poor)	med.	low	lives in ashes and dirty hovels	very distrustful; will not negotiate unless guarantor ("was") has been posted whom he will plague in case of non-payment. Can become protective.		the "poor man's zar".

Female Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Rahēlo	very great, Chief female zar.	high	once carried off by the "ganyēn" (djinn) to the Blue Nile, but saved by her brother Ṣāyfu Ḳangar; however, impregnated in the rape, she gave birth to the evil "zars of the left guard". Christian, yet was married to Mualim Ṣāh Anbāso.	evil, never becomes protective.	lemon tree (like her brother).	causes miscarriages, preferably in rich or noblewomen, for she is a snob. Amulets and formulae of dabtära may have power against her.
Shanqit	med.	low; servant of Rahelo	Shanqalla (lowland negroid tribe below southwest border). Considered "pagan".	fickle like all female zars, but can become protective.		possesses only ex-slave and very low-class women. If protective, will teach how to be a good hostess, which Shanqit has learned while serving Rahelo.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specialisations.
Shotalay	great	mod.	no special affiliation; ranges unlimited.	very evil, never protective.		renders women sterile and barren, even kills babies. Drinks blood magically, causing victim to waste away (like "buda"). Hence zar doctors try to exorcise her completely, by transferring the possession onto a chicken, killing it in the open, throwing it away.
Ayne Tela (lit. shadow eye. Hence evil eye).	mod.	low	no special affiliation.	evil, never protective, but not very powerful when alone. Parasitic zar, waiting for the spoils left by other zars.		general troublemaker. Tries to prevent patient from entering trance properly, confusing the "diagnosis", confusing other zars when about to reveal their names. Likes to attack men that have been attacked by other zars and thus weakened.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sawädayt	little	low	regional in watercourses and lakes and the sea.	regarded as mermaid, half-fish as result of intercourse she had with Gädewon, king of the sea.		occasionally endangers people crossing streams or exposed to drowning.
Teggerta (also called Waddegeni)	great	med.	considered universal	evil, but can be cajoled by continuous attention and cultivation. Treated also by amulets of däbtära.		causes apathy, depression, catatonic states, esp. in women, esp. after childbirth. Patient must be coaxed with delicacies, bright ornaments, music and dancing. Also causes psychotic delusions, in either men or women.

X794 JK From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective- spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the [B12] zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Säyfu Čhängär (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yäkatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

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possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, "for the zar".

Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the ("mänfas gubaé" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

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X794 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping,
756 fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning
556 cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for
675 each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange
776 for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been
776 some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämäshrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight
[691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the
694 Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

X 774 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X 774 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X 774 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Ṭemqät (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Čhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on tazkar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭemqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

754 776 B. Evil-Eye Sickness ("Buda") and its Healing.

Even "zar" spirits are considered vulnerable to the evil-eye sickness, the most feared of all ailments. The human patient must either be cured or will die. The evil spirits, collectively named "buda" - though that name is taboo - are never benign, and must be exorcised. Buda possessions are less common than "zar". The most common method of the "evil-eye buda is to "drink the blood" of his victim, magically, so that he will slowly waste away. The buda spirit does this by draining the victim through the magic power of the evil eye.

a) Basic Concepts of "buda".

"Buda" is the personification of the evil eye, a concept that includes the evil spirit itself; the sorcerer, regarded as most commonly a male member of the professional, ethnic ironsmith caste passing on the power of the evil eye from generation to generation; and the "magical hyena" which serves the sorcerer as his favorite "horse", but into which he can also change himself at night. The hyena is, of course, the most typical and most active night-animal, and its habit of digging into fresh graves to consume the corpses, which can be observed almost daily, seems to confirm the connection in the Amhara mind.

[17] The foreign observer is reminded of the similarity to the were-wolf concept of mediaval Europe, which was also regarded as personified in some ethnic minority; and the common evil-eye concept still casting fear all over the Middle East. [121]

121. Zisler, R.: Man into Wolf. London 1951
Jaussen, J.A.: Le Mauvais Deil. Revue Biblique, 33, Paris 1924, pp. 396-407

T54 T76 [704] The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (ayna täla); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

T54 609 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution, lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "täbib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

T54 T76 [609] The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

[89] [164]

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[58] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[82] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("talalafi basheta") and severe epilepsy ("yabuda basheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

000 strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

776 Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda;
754 the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are not hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

776 754 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

754 158 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänabbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

754 [K4] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "näggära". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

• 776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [B2B] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyën") and the diviner ("tänqway")

While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyën" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyën spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyën, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

TK 177 It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 754 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfas gubaē, acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000). It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1043-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

[valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $440)." -Analyst]

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the täñqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The täñqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the täñqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "täñqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diagnosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (sagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their direction and mutual position.

Some dabtära have grown wealthy through mass-production of amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A frequent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
755

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "hetab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialities, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease speciality	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Läqana"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Aynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Ayna Tela" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temherta hebuat". intoxicant plant "esk fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabe Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legewon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("hemama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado.	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werzelya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yildas tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susnayos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mitib".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotalay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegarteya", "Teggerta", "Kaddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Ratra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Dabra Manfas Qeddus (lit. Saint Servant-of-Soul), an Amhara saint from the province of Shoa, who was a saint from birth, and who, instead of dying the usual way, entered heaven in bodily shape.

Takla Haymanot, the foremost Abyssinian saint, and an actual historical figure. An Amhara bishop from Shoa province, he lived in the 13th century and founded the still existing monaster of Dabra Libanos. He too is regarded as a saint from birth. His sacred spring at the monastery is regarded as powerful holy water, and those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as far as Addis Ababa (about 150 kilometers away), have water brought in Chianti bottles. The bones of important persons are sometimes unearthed and sent to rest under cave ledges at this monaster. Many austerities, miracles, conversions of heathens, and even temporary conversion of the devil himself are ascribed to him. On church paintings and amulets, Haymanot is depicted with one leg missing, lost during a martyrdom, but with wings which protected him from falling down the steep mountains of Abyssinia.

Iswodros (St. Theodor), regarded as the founder of the Abyssinian monastery of Dabra Maryam. But the name is also used as a synonym for another Messiah, who, according to a 14th century Abyssinian book "Feqqara Iyasus" (lit. Love of Jesus) will some day come from the east, conquer the world, usher in a long period of peace and prosperity, preceding the final catastrophy. (Probably with this tradition in mind, the usurper Kassa had himself crowned Emperor Theodore, in 1855).

Jesus Christ himself is regarded as a powerful magician, more powerful than the powerful magicians Moses and Solomon, over animate as well as inanimate matter. The curative spells used by Jesus are

177 contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafa Tsedeq".

[776] African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "grisgris" of West Africa. [126]

756 [177] The dabtära thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Greeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some dabtära specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

126. See Lifschyz: Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

776 174 797 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, denoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 [182] Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who held the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 562] While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 754 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 status.

181 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the
776 negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions
[87] of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration; arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe
000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was a Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land.

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*.

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziäbhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man."

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied:

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"If God wants me to, I may go to school; but it is hard to know what God will want."

As a corollary of this outlook, the main way for man to achieve anything on earth is to pray to the Almighty. If one prays properly, God's power can be invoked to punish one's foes. In former times at least, the peasant went to church and prayed for vengeance, then expected his enemy to fall sick or die. If he could not pray effectively himself, he would give money to a priest and the latter would do the job for him. It is commonly believed by the Amhara peasantry today that their praying and fasting were a major factor in ridding the country of the Italian invaders.

This conception of deity is at heart that of the early Old Testament, a powerful Lord who punishes, rewards, and avenges. But it is suffused with the pagan feeling for a plurality of deities. The Amhara is constantly aware of a number of supernatural beings other than *Egziābhĕr* who affect his life for better or for worse.

Some of these are the simple agents of God in everyday affairs. Each individual receives at birth a pair of guardian angels of his own sex, one for daytime and one for night. They serve to protect him from accidents, sickness, and enemies. When some misfortune befalls a person, it is because God has ordered his guardian angels to neglect their duties.

More important are the many supernatural beings with wills of their own. Among the benevolent spirits the main figures are:

Miḳā'ĕl	The archangel Michael
Gabre'ĕl	The archangel Gabriel
Giyorgis	St. George
Madhānĕ Alam	Savior of the World
Selassie	Trinity
Māryām	St. Mary
Abbo	Gabra Manfas Qeddus, an Abyssinian saint
Taḳla Hāymānot	Another Abyssinian saint

Most Amhara are particularly devoted to some one of these sacred figures. Partiality to one or another may be due to the fact that it is the patron saint of one's father, or represented in one's Christian name, or commemorated by the church in one's area. In time of sickness, a man will drink holy water from the church of a certain saint, and make a vow, for example, "If Giyorgis cures me, I will give money to the church in his name, I will kill a lamb for him, and I will drink in a Giyorgis *māhebar* ("religious fraternal association") every month thereafter."

These sacred figures are represented by numerous holy arks, or *tābot*. A *tābot* is a hollow oblong box containing some sacred script. It is identified

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with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ĭnjarā* to the people."

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them.

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain.

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship.

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of

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many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[6]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

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world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[1]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

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Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *Ābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-sucking is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no matter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly replicate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

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261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
291 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *Injarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
291 The exchange of *gursha* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *Injarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālinjarā*, is the same as that for the English "companion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering
[293] barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *tonin*, is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[19]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem*, if not *circenses*. The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *Injarā* baskets around the field. A truly
594 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zīker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ţegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ţayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *ċhirāq* is sometimes evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still another figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of sucking and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discontinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amhara is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[88] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against temptations and persecutions; the *sïmḥer* relates their miraculous feats; and the *malkʿa*, a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly subject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas*, which means "praise."

While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular following in the population, his popularity varying according to region and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of the religious books.

Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Personal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which personal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā*.

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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+ 753 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,
• 776 are in abundance, however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

* 753 Zars select their victims carefully, most often
* 787 choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is sig-
776 nalled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting
562 headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

* 753 Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (watetey) are at-
776 tributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-
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*[192]

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pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this, they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no communication is possible; their demands are known from convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman permanently.

Zars contrast with ganels in several significant respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence, together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen. When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin blackman, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet) strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dangerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

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undefineable fear and anxiety (ayni tila); the ganel's shadow is sufficient to render the constitutionally frail child feeble-minded (mun). Although ganels in nocturnal ambush sometimes strike blows resulting in epileptic seizures or apoplexy, and although their human partners may oblige them to send almost any ailment, most ganel-caused sicknesses result from indirect contact with their malignant persons (likift).

Likift refers to the transformation of innocuous substances into morbid or corrosive stuffs, through contact with certain agents. The ganel is the most virulent of these agents, and the most serious form of ganel-likift results from the ingestion of food which has been tasted by him. Frequently, this is food which has been left uncovered overnight. Once in the stomach, the likift-substance interferes with digestion and produces acute diarrhea. Simultaneously, it washes up to affect the contiguous heart, which reacts to this irritant

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with rapid pulsations and pain. The sickman (himemteña) becomes greatly fatigued by this cardiac activity and finds it particularly difficult to breathe; the combination of pain, fatigue, and wosfat attrition leads in turn to anorexia. Since the likift-substance works on contact, washing with ganel-touched water results in a variety of skin ailments---septacemia, hemorrhagic and acute ulcers, scabies, scrofula and, infrequently, lep-

*753
•776 rosy.

*753 825 Likift-powers are also associated with crawling insects, spiders, lizards, and the infrequent highland snake. As with the ganel, these creepers are innately contaminating, either through direct contact with their persons, or indirectly through media which they have touched---such as clothing and water---or which they have *[192] expelled---such as uring and saliva. This likift results in ringworm, varioloid and exzemoid skin diseases; because of their inherent toxicity, these creatures are also frequent ingredients in poisonous infusions (yijeseb).

*753 776 825 Sometimes, it is problematic whether the conditions which attract the attentions of ganel and creeper are not themselves sufficient to produce certain syndromes. For example, serious stomach pain, bloat, and feverish coughing are linked to the consumption of stale food or soured talla beer; these substances are, in turn, favorites of ganels. Similarly, the stench of bodily filth appeals to ganel and creeper, and is a common precursor to scabies and various rashes. However, both spoiled foodstuffs and filth are believed noxious enough to produce these ailments, without requiring the assistance of ganels or creepers.

*753 821 The notion of contact-pathogenicity which characterizes likift is also associated with a sun-borne agency known as gerifta. There is an important difference be-

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*756 mains---bone and jimat, teeth and jaws, tonsils and
*759 uvula, womb and associated organs.
*192 Category 2. Therapeutic success relies on the use
196 of medicaments; practitioners of this category utilize the third therapeutic strategy. Although no single term properly distinguishes these therapists from other categories of practitioners, they are, as a class, described by a common set of professional titles. Each title consists of three terms. The first indicates the name of the ailment for which the practitioner owns a therapy. Unlike other categories of practitioners, professional titles among these therapists are specific for single named ailments, rather than for a range of ailments. The second term is always the word "medhaniyt" ("medicament"). The maker of therapeutic amulets is the single exception to this (e.g., yidemaketir kitab kitabiy, "amulet maker for post-partum bleeding"). The final term indicates the format and "completeness" of the herbal therapy practiced. Thus, the "yianfula medhaniyt awakiy" is the "medicine expert for the ailment known as anfula".

*[776] Category 3. Therapeutic success derives from the practitioner's intimacy with spirit beings (ganel, zar, or saint of the Church) and his familiarity with magic (asmat); he relies upon the fourth therapeutic strategy.
*[793] The term "tonkway" is sometimes used to denote the most prominant practitioners of this category, the debtera-

woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth. The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganela, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The midwife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.

mation, the debtera's powers are derived from his intimacy with spirit beings, the ganels.

The therapeutic usefulness of the debtera's familiars is believed to be related to the ability of ganels to produce a wide variety of ailments. Some of these ailments coincide symptomatically with ailments treatable by herbalists (although they are etiologically distinct), other of these ailments can be cured by herbalists' therapies, and yet other ailments caused by ganels are symptomatically distinct from any ailments treatable by herbalists. These relationships between practitioner, etiology, and syndrome are diagrammed and annotated in Table 6.

From the perspective of the client, the debtera is therapeutically effective because he can force or cajole his familiars to communicate therapeutically significant information (including pharmacological information) and to give other assistance. The debtera's power is conceived by the clients in terms of his ability to control his familiars. The most powerful debtera is the ganel gelac, a practitioner whose therapies the client can never divorce from direct associations with ganel familiars. For the "weaker" debtera, however, it is only in the abstract that clients posit a causal role for spirit familiars in any episode that such a debtera treats successfully. In the context of actual disease episodes,

the connection between the weak debtera, his familiars, and his therapies is, at most, tacit, and unarticulated. More often, clients ignore the tie altogether, and conveniently assimilate this debtera into position (8) of the logically maximal chain.

The diagnostic significance of this move does not detain the client. Therapeutic success is in itself regarded as sufficient, and diagnostic speculation is not indulged. Therapeutic failure, likewise, tends to be interpreted in pragmatic terms only, indicating that the services of a more powerful healer must be obtained if the sickman is to be cured. Probably, the choice will be a ganel gelac, but it is possible that even an herbalist of reknown will be chosen.

Real herbalist chains are, then constructed by clients on an ad hoc basis. In constructing his herbalist chain, the client is dependent upon, first, the actual distribution of relevant practitioners within his environs, and, second, persons who can communicate this information to him. A client knows the herbal specialties of most residents of his own hamlet, and of the more prominent healers of the parish in which his hamlet is located. Beyond the parish, however, he knows the names of few secular practitioners, and these few are healers with whom he has stood previously as a client. To build his chain, he must often rely on information

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lower grade herbalist is favored.

There are no obvious non-medical advantages, neither relative nor absolute, for the client who chooses a higher grade herbalist. An herbalist initiates the patient into no relationships which endure beyond the length of the therapy. The onset of a disease episode, particularly one characterized by a serious ailment, has important consequences for the relationships between the sickman and members of his household, and between him and other individuals to whom he is bound by important rights and obligations. These changes are generally perceived in terms of non-participation by the sickman, particularly in affective and subsistence contexts. However, consultation with an herbalist does not itself significantly affect the relationships. Submission to herbalist therapy, for example, does not validate a claim to a particular sickman state, since this is determined within the domestic unit, prior to professional consul-

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tation. Repeated therapeutic failure, far from discrediting the sickman's claims, can only escalate the seriousness of the epidose, moving it etiologically to the domain of ganels and zars---agents more worrisome prognostically than those against whom the herbalist works.

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The Weak Debtera-Healer in Table 6. In the abstract, laymen define the medical identity of all debtera-healers in terms of associations with spirit

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 93]

*753 than A.

Syndrome 3: This syndrome is caused by likift, and the ganel is considered a likely (non-purposive) agent.

*[192] Syndrome 4: This syndrome is produced by contact with dirty (kovšaša) objects or places (e.g., hearth ashes, excreta, filthy clothing). Association with ganels is at most implicit, since such places are considered favorite resting places of these beings.

*[192] Syndrome 5: The association with ganels is most tenuous here. Ayni šefin bašiyta, for example, may be brought about by either an eye-lash which has taken root in the sickman's eye, or by over-exposure to the smoke of domestic fires. Ganels could be invoked to explain why this particular sickman was involved in this particular disease episode. Recourse to this explanation is unlikely, however, since the ganel characteristically acts as a purposive, non-adventitious agent in syndromes of types 1 and 2 (i.e., where the ganel is the sole or alternative causal agent whose disease causing is direct and unmediated through ganel-likift).

*753 *756 *793 *776 The Strong Debtera in Table 6. To the potential client, the tie between a powerful debtera-healer (ganel gelac) and his ganel familiars is necessary and sufficient to explain this debtera's therapeutic successes. Even syndromes of type 4, although not customarily linked to

a ganel-agent, can be explained as ganel-caused if treated successfully by the following (real) practitioner chains:

(1)-->(2)-->(3), or (2)-->(3)

Because of their substantial fees, clients generally limit therapy consultations with strong debteras to episodes involving serious ailments. Since such ailments are very frequently traced to ganel agents (syndromes of types 1 and 2), the diagnostic relevance of the strong debtera's cures tends to be reinforced empirically.

THE BALAZAR

A balazar ("zar bearer") is a man or woman who has been selected as a "mount" (feres) by a zar spirit. Most often, the zar signals his interest in an individual by producing a syndrome known as kureyña. At its simplest, the ailment is characterized by chronic stomach pain, generally accompanied by headache. Within the context of Amhara nosology, these are highly ambiguous symptoms, and four alternative etiologies are possible. At its most innocuous, the ailment is classified descriptively as "hod himem ina ras mitat" (literally, "stomach ailment and headache"), and traced to gerifta and likift pathogens. The three other etiologies are sorcery (sray), divine displeasure (mekseft), and zar possession (kureyña);

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*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] [602] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent females (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks
• 776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

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tempts to communicate with the sickman's supposed zar. The object of the dialogue is, first, to identify the sickman's zar by name. In the abstract, the zars are believed to be multitudinous, but in practice the members of a hadra will be acquainted with only a score or so of these spirits. Each of these zars is named, and recognized for his social identity (e.g., sex, age, occupation, religion), his characteristic attitude towards human mounts, and his ability to influence the conduct of other zars. The initial dialogue further attempts to learn what precisely the spirit wishes in return for ceasing to afflict his host. Often a sickman's zar is unresponsive, and the sickman must undergo a regimen, often lasting several weeks, at the home of the hadra leader. During this period, the sickman is induced to sleep for long stretches of time. During this period a decoction of cat (Catha edulis Forsk) is given the sickman to drink.[10] This regimen is maintained until the unruly zar has been "socialized" and is prepared to converse intelligibly (in zar argot) through his host. Conversely, some zars reveal their identities rapidly and explicit-

[10]Interestingly, when eaten fresh the leaves of cat appear to act as a wakefulness-producing stimulant (Hill 1965:17).

*755 *776 787 ly, so that the sickman is afflicted with the kureyña symptoms for only a short time before the zar is successfully engaged in conversation.

*753 *756 *756 776 Zars demand periodic gifts (mainly jewlry and clothing), and regular attendance at the hadra of the awakiy balazar who first contacted the sickman's zar. At the hadra meetings, special foods favored by the zars are served, and members are mounted by their familiars. The zar who is neglected punishes his host with a recurrence of kureyña or some other ailment, until his requirements are fulfilled.

A hadra leader is frequently possessed by ten or more zars; characteristically, all are cooperative, and several are powerful zars, capable of influencing the behavior of weaker spirits. In contrast, other members of the hadra are each mounted by one or two less resolute and often capricious zars. The zars of the hadra leader are helpful in persuading the zars of hadra members to define what gifts they demand in return for a surcease in their pathogenic activities. Through his familiars, the awakiy balazar learns therapies for ailments with which hadra members are afflicted by their zars. These therapies are often necessary, but never sufficient, to bring about cures, since they remove only the immediate causes of the sickman's ailments. The awakiy balazar occasionally provides therapeutic services for individu

*753 *755 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more fre-
*756 quently, provides divinatory services for clients.
• 776 For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the balazars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

131 133 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a *[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan basiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

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*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
• [776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astomariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

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months, and years (gemena) which are non-propitious for the subject's well-being, 2) the age to which the subject will probably live and the age (always markedly longer) to which he may live if appropriate prophylaxes are employed, 3) bad omens (often indicated as a color of men, animals, or land), 4) dangerous places and environmental conditions. (The text likewise indicated propitious dates, omens, and places.) In addition, the text describes the subject's social persona and the responses it will (eventually) elicit from the people with whom he interacts.

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While the kokob text addresses a variety of interests, the texts of the second awdunigist category are more specialized. From a medical point of view, these texts can be divided into the following six types, according to the services that each provides:

1. These are exclusively medical texts, providing detailed information of prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic utility, and coinciding with the range of medical interests considered by the kokob text. This information is relevant to the period specified by the debtera in his calculations.

[774] 2. These texts name the saints, angels, and biblical persons who are particularly disposed to assisting the subject. Although this information is not exclusively of medical relevance, it is useful for constructing the

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*756 *793 ness to the ganel-tainted character of the debtera.
732 The layman simplifies the debtera's career by sup-
*756 posing that most debteras (certainly the abinet-prac-
*793 ticing ones) are former priests, men who broke their priestly vows by committing adultery. Impelled by shame to leave the natal community along a path of increasingly sinful deeds, they are morally spoiled even before becoming debteras. In reality, only a very small proportion of debteras have been recruited this way, for such men are generally ill-suited in age, intellect, and temperament to the lengthy, arduous, and often demeaning apprenticeship required of the debtera. The breaking of priestly vows, is, in addition, a very serious matter, and few men would have the temerity to mock the supernaturals of the Church a second time.

TECHNICAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF GANEL-DERIVED POWER

*756 *793 *755 *776 The layman's distinction between fragmented secular healing powers and the generic power of the debtera is based on the misconception that the complicity of ganels stands behind the awakiy debtera's medical superiority. In reality, the debtera acquires his repertoire of herbal therapies, digams, kifat recipes, and awdunigist texts individually or in small numbers, from fellow practitioners. Further, although the ties between an awakiy

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debtera and ganela are real enough, they do not conform with the layman's notions of intimacy and friendship. Rather, they are either 1) specific and impersonal, in the case of offensive works (kifat), or 2) episodic and manipulative, in the case of ganel pulling (gabiy).

The following paragraphs of this section describe these abinet activities which involve the complicity of ganela and consider them in terms of instrumental value and moral significance to the debtera.

Kifat Works. Kifat (literally "evil") works are abinet which send illness, death, and other misfortunes onto selected victims. Illnesses caused by kifat works are inevitably serious, and coincide symptomatically with ailments that have non-kifat work etiologies. They fall into three categories. The first includes ailments which are characterized by combinations of severe and prolonged stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and kijet (nightmares); these ailments are difficult for the layman to diagnose correctly; they are resistant to secular therapy, and are all considered potentially mortal. Kifat works of the second category produce ibidet (madness), and are expressed symptomatically as compulsions to either wander about aimlessly, or to sit incoherently in a single place. Ibidet is also caused by mers (poison potions), for which kifat work

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* 793 child, or his livestock.[36] (In reality, the client's
754 selection is more likely to be determined by considerations of cost than of casuistry.) The debtera may further dissociate himself from the morality of a particular episode, by giving the client the sorcery bundle, with directions for its use. The debtera owning kifat considers the transmission of kifat knowledge during abinet exchange to be more fraught with moral danger than his use of it. To preclude this obstacle to the easy exchange of abinet, the recipient customarily foreswears the use of the kifat work unless he is pressed by persecutors and without alternatives.

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* [192] Pulling Ganels. Ganels are organized into a simple hierarchy composed of individually named commanders (azmac) and anonymous subordinates (tazaj). Supreme among ganels is the fallen angel Satanael. His several hundred lieutenants are divided into ganels responsible for sending specific ailments or misfortunes, and local commanders who repose in the lakes, rivers, and mountain tops of Ethiopia. The multitude of subordinate ganels are the immediate bearers of sickness and misfortune; their

[36] The debtera is not expected to provide any detailed information, such as the identity of the specific ailment of misfortune he intends to send.

work is done at the direction of the commanders, or is struck adventitiously as the opportunity arises.

A debtera calls ganels to obtain either information or the promise of services. Only ganel commanders are summoned. In contrast to their ganel subordinates, they are more difficult to call, and more cunning. However, they alone possess the therapeutically useful information which the debtera desires, whether for a specific disease episode at hand, or a disease category associated with ganel causal agents. The information which the debtera obtains supplements abinet that he already owns, and does not constitute complete therapies. The debtera also calls ganels to direct them to command subordinates to perform pathogenic works against persons he wishes to strike down, or to desist from afflicting the debtera's client.

Ganel-calling abinet works consist of three sets of activities. First a specific, named commander is "pulled" from his repose into the debtera's presence (thus, the title "ganel sabiy", "demon puller", by which such debteras are popularly known).[37] It is easiest to call a

[37]This title is interchangeable with "ganel aciwac" ("converser with the ganel"), and "ganel gelac" ("revealer of the ganel").

tions of awdunigist).

The destructive power of ganels is the shadow of divine grace. Although the goodness of divine power is perfect, divine intentions are realized through the promise of sanctions (mekseft), as well as grace. The ganels are utilized for the operation of these sanctions. Christians are each protected by a pair of angel guardians (maliket), in the command of the Almighty. Divine displeasure is expressed by removing these guardians from the principal or his children.[40] Once a breach is opened, ganels are certain to attack, for they pursue their destructive goals indiscriminately, striking where opportunity, rather than special interest beckons.[41]

[40]Not all cases of ganel assaults can be traced to divine motives, however. Occasionally, ganels are able to outwit or overwhelm an individual's angel guardians, particularly when a debtera forces them to attack a vulnerable target. The precise balance between a man's assets (guardian angels, kitab protectors) and deficits (vulnerabilities indicated by awdunigist, ganel sabiy influence on ganels) is never a matter of speculation in specific episodes, however.

[41]Generally, very holy monks, in lives of seclusion and prayer given over entirely to the Almighty, are singled out by ganels, for physical assaults and temptations of the flesh.

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*753 *755 *756 *793 he must reorder his social environment. Preference is given to either killing his persecutor or frightening him away, through the use of sorcery or mundane violence. If ego is unable to accomplish this, he must himself move to some place where his talat can no longer affect him, or would no longer find it necessary to do so.

*753 *787 • 776 With zar-caused ailments, the sickman can obtain a lasting remission of symptoms only by entering into a permanent relationship with the pathogenic agent, rather than countering it. Here, the sickman withdraws from his existing moral milieu, and acknowledges, as a member of a hadra (zar coterie), a permanent dependence on the good will of the zars. Once the initial diagnosis has been confirmed and ego's zar has been successfully treated with, each succeeding disease episode binds ego still more closely to the society of zars and balazars.

[562] The social and moral consequences of accomodating zars are very different for men and for women. For women, who constitute over eighty percent of zar-possessed folk, zar familiars offer a degree of security that the host finds difficult to obtain in human society. In contrast to other purposive agents, the pathogenic motives of zars are at once transparent and manageable: Zars sicken their hosts in order to extort gifts of jewlery and clothes, and deferential performances at the

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hadra meeting. While zars often cause painful and potentially mortal ailments, prognoses are favorable, since the zars' ultimate interests are served best by keeping their victims well enough to continue to meet their demands.

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A woman who excludes zars from her disease etiologies assumes great vulnerabilities. Without zar familiars, she must build etiologies from the mortal intentions of sorcerers, poisoners, and ganels. Against these agents, a woman can generally afford to raise only weak prophylactic defenses, and the cost of expert therapy (by an awakiy debtera) is usually beyond her slender means. Unmarried townswomen are particularly vulnerable in this regard, since they are without interested mates to purchase necessary debtera therapy or to insist on etiologies consistent with the teachings of the Church.

For a man, zar possession is shameful, and the appearance of symptoms which might indicate a zar etiology (i.e., kureyña) are preferably traced to other pathogenic agents. While the hadra provides its female members with opportunities for self-assertiveness otherwise impossible, the man who accepts the suzerainty of the zars commits himself to performances and associations which contradict the customary social behavior of Amhara men. He is serateña (servant, usually female) or even bariya (slave) to zar whims, which cast him in demeaning

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and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal, rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men. What is more, his shame is public, since the zars generally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored border be woven into the normally undecorated white toga of Amhara men.

The type of practitioner that a client consults influences the final etiology with which his disease episode is finally rationalized. In the context of category three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable of translating the disease episode into a confirmation of the client's normative social state. Failing more innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sickman as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud (i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual access to women.